

# REFUGEE

Arizona Refugee Resettlement Journal

# resettlement

Volume 9, Issue 2

February 2008

## SAVE THE DATE FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**MARCH 31 – APRIL 1, 2008**

**BLACK CANYON CONFERENCE CENTER,  
PHOENIX**

The 2008 Refugee Resettlement Program Annual Conference will be held on March 31 – April 1, 2008 at the Black Canyon Conference Center, located at 9440 N. 25th Avenue, Phoenix. This year's conference is an exciting opportunity for refugees, refugee service organizations and members of the general public to learn and share about the changing dynamics of refugee resettlement, and best practices that are helping refugees to successfully transition to life in Arizona.

The conference theme is *Refugees in Arizona: Along the Path of Freedom Lie the Seeds of Hope*. The two-day program will feature the following five tracks: Understanding the Refugee Resettlement Process; Skill Development for Refugee Resettlement Practitioners; Culturally Responsive Approaches to

Refugee Integration Issues; Modern Day Slavery; and Education for Refugee Children and Youth.

### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

The keynote speakers at this year's conference will be Sokhom Tauch, Executive Director, Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO), Portland, Ore., and Mona K. Oshana, a Phoenix-based Realtor, and the author of the recently released book, *Look Beyond the Fire: Daily Life Under Saddam's Regime*.

A native of Cambodia, Tauch was one of millions who fled the war-torn country in the mid-1970s. He was one of the original "boat people," sailing first to Malaysia and then to Subic Bay, Philippines. He came to the U.S. in 1976, and has

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Sokhom Tauch

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## U.S. RESPONDS TO GROWING NEEDS OF IRAQI REFUGEES

Due to rising levels of insecurity, violence and targeted persecution, Iraqis are increasingly seeking asylum in neighboring countries. Currently, there are more than 2.5 million refugees living in Jordan, Syria and Turkey, and an additional 2.2 million who have been displaced from their homes but are without the means to leave the country.

The Iraqi refugee crisis represents the greatest displacement of people in the Middle East since 1948. These refugees are of all faiths and ethnic backgrounds, including Sunnis, Shi'ites, Chaldeans, Mandaeans, Palestinians, Sudanese and others. They include women-at-risk, former U.S. Government employees, former humanitarian aid workers contracted with U.S. NGOs, unaccompanied refugee minors, religious minorities, families, individuals and the elderly. Many are highly

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# A WORD FROM THE STATE COORDINATOR

Dear Friends,

Recently Arizona commemorated the birthday of American Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King is best known for his role in combating segregation through non-violent means in the racially-charged South during the early 1960's. His vision of a desegregated America led to the 1963 march on Washington, where he delivered his much acclaimed "I Have a Dream" speech. That following year, on the occasion of his acceptance of the Nobel Peace prize for his efforts, Dr. King further expressed his views on integration when he told the audience that he believed all people could have "three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirit."

It is in the same spirit that refugee resettlement operates today – with the ultimate goal of refugees' full integration into welcoming communities and their eventual civic engagement as bona fide citizens. As you read this issue of the *Refugee Resettlement Journal* and learn about the latest developments of refugee-serving organizations in Arizona, consider the words of Martin Luther King Jr. and ponder how each of us contribute to nurturing communities where all people, including refugees, have the opportunity to flourish. I also encourage you to take part in the 2008 Arizona Refugee Resettlement Program Conference at which we will explore refugee integration and models of community collaboration.

Warmly,



Charles Shipman  
State Refugee Coordinator ■



## REFUGEE Arizona Refugee Resettlement Journal resettlement

The *Arizona Refugee Resettlement Journal* is a quarterly publication produced by the Arizona Refugee Resettlement Program which is federally funded and administered by the Arizona Department of Economic Security.

Currently, the publication is circulated to 400 program providers, members of the refugee community and other interested parties.

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STATE REFUGEE COORDINATOR  
AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
Charles Shipman

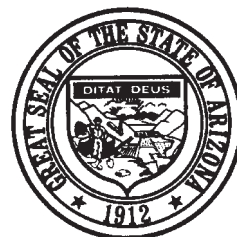
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INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFUGEES

The International Rescue Committee has designed a series of economic development programs which are available to refugees, asylees, certified victims of trafficking and certain entrants until citizenship. These programs include: financial training; microenterprise (small business) development; individual development accounts; and the Fostering Agricultural Refugee Microenterprise (FARM) program.

**FINANCIAL TRAINING**

This program provides refugees with opportunities to learn about a variety of financial topics including banking and budgeting, credit, consumer issues, homeownership, and the American tax system, including income tax preparation assistance.

Through this program, IRC provides educational outreach, one-on-one and group counseling service and support for the Individual Development Accounts (IDA) Program. This matched-savings program overcomes barriers to home ownership for participants by helping them save for a home while learning about the financial process it involves.

For more information about this program, please contact Amila Glisic at (602) 433-2440, ext. 204.

**SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE**

The Microenterprise Development Program provides support for entrepreneurs in order for them to succeed in business in the United States. The program provides support in three ways: one-to-one technical support, training and access to capital.

One-to-one technical support is tailored to meet the exact needs of each client and their specific business idea. It also forms strong personal relationships with clients, leading to mitigation of loan loss risk.

Clients who need specific training outside the expertise of program staff are referred to mainstream providers such as the Small

Business Development Center, certification schools, etc.

Access to capital can be a barrier to new immigrants because they lack credit history. The IRC can lend up to \$10,000 for first time loans and up to \$15,000 for second time loans. It also

offers several different products, such as "Fast Track Loans," and fee-based or interest-free loans.

For more information please call the program coordinator or program manager to schedule an appointment. Kelly Irwin, the Program Coordinator, is available at (602) 433-2440, ext. 215.

**INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNTS**

In this program, the IRC provides matched savings accounts for low-income working refugees, asylees, certified victims of trafficking and certain entrants specifically for building assets: first-time home ownership, and/or

small business assets.

Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) are a different approach to helping individuals and families with low incomes. Instead of giving families income assistance, the IDA program helps these individuals and families invest in assets that build their economic security. IRC currently has two sources of matching funds, and, if eligible, applicants may receive both concurrently.

Under the IDEA program, aimed at helping qualified, first-time homebuyers, IRC will match their savings, on a three-to-one basis, up to \$15,000 for down payment and closing costs. These funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis and participants are not guaranteed matching funds from this source.

Under the ORR IDA program, first-time homebuyers and individuals who wish to start or expand a small business may qualify for matching IRC funds on a one-to-one basis, up to \$2,000 per individual and \$4,000 per household.

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*Access to capital  
can be a barrier  
to new  
immigrants  
because they lack  
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AREA AGENCY ON AGING**MOSIAC AMBASSADOR PROGRAM  
AIMED AT OLDER REFUGEES**

**T**he Area Agency on Aging, Region One, based in Phoenix, is part of a national network of organizations established under the 1971 Older Americans Act (OAA) to respond



to the needs of older adults. Among its many activities is the Mosaic Elder Refugee Program, which was created to address the needs of older refugees. Called the Mosaic

Ambassador Program, it is funded in part by the Arizona Department of Economic Security, Refugee Resettlement Program. Through collaboration with other community organizations, it provides services and support to elder refugees in Maricopa County.

For many older refugees, the inability to learn sufficient English is a huge barrier to assimilating into the mainstream of American life. This frustration is multiplied by the feelings of isolation they experience, which result from their inability to adjust socially, as well as the dramatic changes that took place in their family and cultural structure.

Kathy Young, a volunteer with the Area Agency on Aging, chairs the Ambassador Program. "Currently," she reports, "we have 16 participants from 10 countries: Afghanistan, Bosnia, Burundi, Congo, Cuba, Ethiopia, Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia and Vietnam. They range in age from 59 to 72. Most of them are already U.S. citizens, are working to become citizens and have family members living here. As we've gotten to know each of them, we've gained much appreciation for the struggles they've endured as refugees."

The participants meet weekly at Arizona State University, and are then taken on tours of various government, educational and other facilities where they have the opportunity to meet with community and government leaders. For example, they've recently toured the State Capitol, Phoenix City Hall, the Police Training Academy, health care facilities, local museums and Luke Air Force Base.

"They not only learn about America in general and this region in particular," Young said, "but it's been great to see how the isolation they feel when they first arrive turns to genuine friendship with their fellow refugees from other lands as they meet together each week. And they're learning great lessons about some of the things that make America different from anything they've known before.

"For example, when they were visiting Luke Air Force Base, one of them expressed that difference in a powerful way. 'Here we are,' he said, 'many of us from countries with which America is at war, and yet you allow us to visit your military facilities.' To me, that says a lot about how well the Mosaic Ambassador Program is working."

More information about the program is available on the agency's web site, [www.aaaphx.org](http://www.aaaphx.org), or by calling (602) 241-6162. ■



*Area Agency ambassadors gather during one of their recent field trips. These excursions provide refugee seniors the opportunity to interact socially and have adventures in new places.*

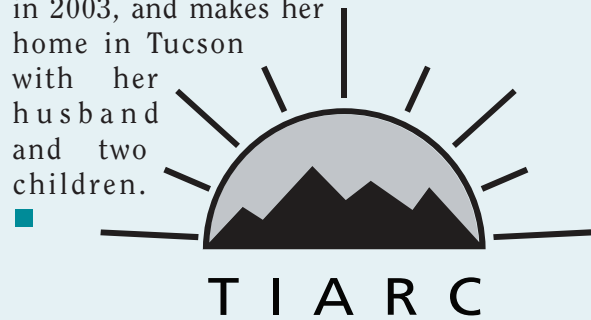
## ERINA DELIC APPOINTED AS TIARC NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**T**he Tucson International Alliance of Refugee Communities (TIARC) has announced the appointment of Erina Delic as its new executive director effective November 12, 2007. TIARC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the well-being of refugees and immigrants by assisting them to become self-sufficient and integrated into American society.

Prior to joining TIARC, Delic had worked for six years at Jewish Family & Children's Service of Southern Arizona, most recently as program director. Born in Croatia, she lived in Bosnia,

where she became a refugee in 1991. After living in Germany for seven years, she came to Tucson as a refugee through the International Rescue Committee. Delic became a U.S. citizen in 2003, and makes her

home in Tucson with her husband and two children.



## MILLIONS CONTRIBUTED FOR IRAQI REFUGEES

*continued from page 1*

educated professionals and successful business people.

These numbers of displaced Iraqis continue to grow, and there are few options available to them. As many as 60,000 per month are newly displaced within Iraq, and 40,000 to 60,000 flee to Syria on a monthly basis. With Jordan and Syria now imposing entry requirements on Iraqis, it is becoming increasingly difficult to leave the country. Many "safer" localities inside Iraq have also closed their internal borders, unable to cope with the large influxes of displaced persons.

### U.S. EXPANDS ROLE

In February 2000, the U.S. Government had virtually no refugee processing infrastructure in the two major asylum countries, Syria and Jordan. Since that time, the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) expanded processing for Iraqi refugee applicants in those two nations, as well as in Egypt, Turkey and Lebanon. USRAP entities have established processing facilities, hired and trained local and international staff, and prepared cases for presentation to adjudicators from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Since 2003, the U.S. Government has been the single largest contributor of humanitarian

assistance for Iraqis. In 2007 alone, that figure was nearly \$200 million, up from \$43 million during the previous year. The U.S. has also contributed \$39 million to the \$130 million United Nations Education appeal, which aims to enroll an additional 150,000 Iraqi children in Jordanian and Syrian schools.

Recognizing the severity of the situation, the U.S. State Department recently announced that it will accept Iraqi refugees during the current fiscal year, which ends September 30, 2008. Interviews are continuing at an accelerated pace, and hundreds of Iraqi refugees have already arrived during this fiscal year for permanent resettlement.

According to Robin Dunn Marcos, Regional Resettlement Director of the IRC Phoenix, "In recent months, we have resettled 62 Iraqis – far short of expectations. The community has been very responsive in assisting the new arrivals and groups such as the Chaldean Federation and the Welcome to America project have been instrumental in providing additional services. The need for resettlement is unquestionable and the resettlement agencies stand ready to provide life-saving resettlement services – we are eager for the overseas processing to begin in earnest." ■

*The Iraqi refugee crisis represents the greatest displacement of people in the Middle East since 1948.*

# NEW DIRECTOR AND MENTAL HEALTH MANAGER NAMED AT IRC

The International Rescue Committee has announced the appointment of Ken Briggs as Regional Resettlement Director of its Tucson, Arizona office. Briggs, who began his new assignment in September 2007, has had many years of experience working with refugees.

Following his graduation from the University of Montana, he began tutoring adult refugees from Laos. He also established the English as a Second Language program in the Missoula elementary school district, and later began a bilingual education program for Hmong refugee children.



Ken Briggs

After serving with a U.S. State Department-funded refugee training program in Thailand, he returned to the U.S., earning a master's degree in intercultural administration from Rocky Mountain College, Billings, Mont., where he taught English as a Second Language, and eventually became director of international programs.

Briggs has been very active in NAFSA: Association of International Educators, where he served in various positions, including chair of Region II and conference chair for the 2004 Region II conference, and as a member of the Trainer Corps.

Another new member of the Tucson IRC team is Aaron Grigg, who has been serving as Mental Health Program Manager since August 2007. He holds both a bachelor's and master's degree in social work from New Mexico State University and Brigham Young University, respectively.

A Licensed Clinical Social Worker, he has worked as a mental health therapist, child and family therapist, and bilingual (Spanish and English) mental health therapist. He is a member of the National Association of Social Workers and has been an active volunteer in many community organizations.

Under his direction, several new initiatives are underway. "New arrivals," he says, "often face isolation and frustration as they try to learn a new language, a new culture, and even how to find their way around the community. Our goal

is to help meet their needs in three primary areas: connecting with the community, networking and problem solving.

"Currently, we're meeting with several refugee families, asking what issues they want to discuss. And, while we meet with the parents, their kids get to play together, which helps to dissolve cultural differences and build friendships." ■



Aaron Grigg

## IRC PROGRAMS

*continued from page 3*

Participants who comply with all requirements are guaranteed a match from this source.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Maynard at (602) 433-2440, ext. 234.

### FARM PROGRAM

When refugee farmers first arrive in Arizona, many find a lot of differences in the climate and therefore a different agricultural landscape. Many who have been used to rain-fed agriculture failed to investigate how agriculture works in Arizona, and find it difficult to fathom how they will be able to practice in this arid land. This fear caused some of them to abandon the occupation they so cherished, settling instead for many years for low-paid hourly jobs.

The Fostering Agricultural Refugees Microenterprises (FARM) program is an initiative of IRC's Phoenix resettlement office, aimed at economic empowerment of the refugees/asylees through agricultural business. It is designed to assist the refugees/asylees to understand Arizona agriculture and to be able to utilize the enormous resources available to them for their economic stability.

This program is open to refugees/asylees from all over the world residing in Maricopa County, who wish to establish their own farm business in Arizona. For more information, please contact Timothy Olorunfemi at (602) 433-2440, ext. 239. ■



# REFUGEE ADVISORY COUNCIL HOSTS PICNIC

More than 400 people spent a sunny Saturday at Mariposa Park in Phoenix when the Refugee Advisory Council on Crime sponsored its annual Refugee Picnic on



November 10, 2007. Refugee families and friends enjoyed free food, games, music and fun, including arts and crafts sales, live music, a tug-of-war game for kids, soccer games and a barbecue.

According to Dragan Subotic, Native arts and crafts are always popular at the annual Refugee Picnic.

Operations Manager at Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest, and an active member of the sponsoring organization, "Everyone seemed to enjoy the food and games and, for many, it was their first opportunity to witness and experience a typical American cultural event." ■



*The Burma-Afghanistan soccer game provided excitement for players and fans alike.*

Soccer photos by Justin Kiggins



# ANNUAL CONFERENCE EDUCATES, INSPIRES

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been active in refugee resettlement since his arrival.

Under his leadership, IRCO has expanded its services in many areas, including youth services, senior services, community development, folk arts, domestic violence services, citizenship, environmental justice and volunteer programming. In 2001, Tauch worked with the IRCO staff and board to purchase its own building and community center for the Portland refugee and immigrant community.

Before becoming executive director, he was IRCO's fiscal manager for more than 15 years, and he has provided numerous fiscal management workshops to refugee self-help organizations in Oregon, Texas and Florida. The title of his message at our 2008 conference is: "Refugee Community Development and Empowerment."

Mona Oshana, whose conference message is titled: "The Psychological Effects of Life in Iraq," was a child when her family escaped from Iraq in 1977, fleeing from their home in Kirkuk to Jordan, and then to the United States, as a result of the brutal persecution of religious and ethnic minority groups by the forces of Saddam Hussein.

In her new book, Oshana vividly captures the thoughts and suppressed way of life of the

forgotten, misunderstood people of Iraq and how decades of oppression have affected their state of mind. Drawing on her own life experiences, she illustrates the anguish and the suffering of her people that is rarely seen or covered by the media.

## OTHER CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Attendees will also have the opportunity to participate in Monday evening's networking reception, which was a popular addition to the 2007 conference. It will be followed by a gala dinner event, with various awards, and presentations by refugee entertainers.

During both conference days, exhibitors, including agencies which serve refugees and community-based organizations, will highlight special programs in Arizona which are available for refugees and asylees.

For more information about the 2008 conference, please call (480) 893-7547, or email [refugeeresettlement@kc-a.com](mailto:refugeeresettlement@kc-a.com). ■



*Mona Oshana*

The logo for the Arizona Department of Economic Security (AZRRP) is a large, stylized, light blue letter 'S' that partially obscures the text to its right.

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### AZRAC: COALITION OF CARE

## A YEAR OLD, ACTIVE, GROWING

**T**he Arizona Refugee Advancement Coalition (AZRAC) is a membership organization comprised of voluntary agencies, mutual assistance associations, community based organizations, individuals and other organizations. Founded in January 2007, its purpose is to enhance the quality of refugee services by increasing understanding of the refugee resettlement process and collaboration within the Arizona community.

According to AZRAC board chair Carolyn Manning, the first year for the organization has been an active one. "We now have about 60 organizations and individuals as members," she reports. "We've formed public relations, membership and education committees, and are putting together modules to take to community groups, explaining who the refugees are, where they came from, why they left, and the challenges they face here in the United States."

She adds: "As our second year gets underway, we're planning on holding monthly membership meetings, and looking to increase the involvement of our members through the committee process."

Regular networking events, called Connections Breakfasts, are now being held on the first Tuesday of each month, beginning at 8 a.m., in the North Staff Dining Room at Phoenix College, 1202 West Thomas Road. The events are free and there is no advance registration required.

AZRAC members also played an active role in the annual Refugee Picnic in November, sponsored by the Refugee Advisory Council on Crime (see separate article on page 7 in this issue).

For more information about AZRAC, please visit its web site at [www.azrac.org](http://www.azrac.org), or call Carolyn Manning at (602) 820-3244. ■